



User facility agreements

What is a User Facility Agreement?

The User Facility Agreement (UFA) is a contractual agreement between the Laboratory and external parties designed to permit outside users, including scientists and engineers from industry, universities and other governmental agencies, to conduct research using the Laboratory's unique experimental research equipment and facilities. (The Laboratory has approximately 40 facilities currently approved and available.)

Why is a User Facility Agreement necessary?

The UFA provides the Laboratory facility managers (groups/divisions) additional sources of funding as well as commercial validation of systems, processes and procedures. In addition, partnership or collaborative agreements can be negotiated concurrently with the UFA providing technical staff with other commercial research validation opportunities and the potential to obtain additional research dollars. The highly unique laboratory facilities also can serve as a magnet for high-tech companies to collaborate with Los Alamos scientists, providing additional opportunities for technical staff to interact with industry.

How does a User Facility Agreement work?

The industrial partner directs the activity that occurs in the Laboratory facility within the framework of the agreement, with Laboratory staff oversight. Typical requests from industry for user-facility access are for fabrication, calibration, testing and evaluation of products and processes. Laboratory staff should keep in mind the following points when entering into a UFA:

- Activity must be conducted on a non-interference basis with Department of Energy-mission-related work.
- Users develop the statement-of-work describing the work they wish to perform.
- Generated information may be protected.
- Users retain rights in intellectual property that is generated, although IP is not anticipated.
- Agreements are typically one year or less, with the actual facility use defined in days or weeks.
- Partner pays all costs associated with using the facility for the tasks defined in the statement of work.
- Agreements can be put in place in two to four weeks if standard agreement language is accepted and all necessary information is received.

Keys to ensure UFA success:

- Regular communication with the partner is essential for successful agreements.
- Work should not begin until the partner's funding is received and a program code has been set up.
- The statement of work may contain company proprietary (OUO) information, which must not be disclosed.

How can I engage in User Facility activities?

For additional information or questions about having a facility approved, go to www.lanl.gov/partnerships online or contact the Technology Transfer (TT) Division at 5-9090.

Update on Appendix F Biological risk assessment

by Doug Beason, associate Laboratory director for Threat Reduction

I'd like to tell you about a particularly worthwhile project that comes from a combination of divisions across Threat Reduction and the Laboratory.

The Biological Risk Assessment project was created to develop a methodology for assessing risk for any biological agent, start to finish, and apply the method in detail to two agents (anthrax and influenza) and the Category A agents of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The project provides Appendix F deliverables under Measure 4.4.

The new project expands the application to both engineered and emerging threats, agriculture and food threats — in total to

more than 30 agents. The multidivisional team developed the methodology, applied the tool and provided the deliverables to the Department of Homeland Security on time in December 2004, after an incredible three-month, all-out effort. The RA team also participated substantively in the National TopOff-III emergency exercise in the spring of 2005.

The members of the team are Norman Johnson, project leader, Center for Homeland Security (CHS); John Ambrosiano, Energy and Infrastructure Analysis (D-4); Helen Cui, Safeguards Systems (N-4); John Darby (retired); Paul Fenimore, Theoretical Biology and Biophysics (T-10) and Paul (Scott) White, Molecular Microbiology and Immunology (B-1).

The value of LDRD



by Tom Bowles,
chief science officer

As most people have heard, issues have (once again) been raised about the LDRD [Laboratory-Directed Research and Development] funding level. The House and

Senate versions limit LDRD at ~ 3 percent and 8 percent, respectively. A second issue is guidance from the Office of Management and Budget to the National Nuclear Security Administration for a 5 percent LDRD program. Since we need to provide a program plan shortly to NNSA, we are working under guidance for a 5 percent LDRD program. However, I would like to assure everyone that the Laboratory is doing everything we can legally do to retain a 6 percent LDRD program.

It is clear that a cut in LDRD would result in a loss of highly talented staff and a reduction in our long-term ability to effectively deliver in our national security programs. Anticipating questions of how LDRD is relevant to the Laboratory's mission, the CSO office and Science Council initiated an effort last fall to document what the return on investment has been from LDRD. We have been using the results of that effort as the basis for why LDRD is so important to the Laboratory.

I thought it would be useful to share with you the primary conclusions of our study. LDRD supports the Laboratory mission by 1) providing new capabilities, solving problems and reducing risk for programs; 2) making processes better, cheaper and faster; and 3) recruiting, retaining and advancing the work force. As examples, we found that 1) LDRD-funded research developed the initial approach for Uncertainty Quantification that has become a core part of assessing the viability of the stockpile, 2) LDRD-funded R&D resulted in a new approach to decontaminating Rocky Flats that resulted in significant cost savings and 3) LDRD funding of postdocs and new staff accounts for a large fraction of the work force that transition into national defense programs. The study documented that the return on investment from LDRD is significantly larger than the investment.

The Laboratory is firm in its statement that a full LDRD program is an essential and critical component of our ability to deliver effectively on our national security responsibilities.